

TOWN OF CENTER HARBOR
Board of Selectmen Public Hearing Minutes
Location and Construction of the Police Department
Saturday, February 14, 2009

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Randy Mattson called the Public Hearing to order at 9:01 a.m. and introduced Selectman Charley Hanson, Selectman Richard Drenkhahn, Police Chief Mark Chase and Fire Chief John Schlemmer. She requested people identify themselves when asking questions or making comments and asked the comments be limited to three to five minutes each. At that point, Ms. Mattson asked Mr. Drenkhahn, the Selectmen's Representative to the Building Committee (BC) to introduce the BC members. Mr. Drenkhahn reported BC members Trevor Chase, Julian Shlager and Steve Condojani could not attend the Public Hearing. He introduced Vice-Chairman Bob Chance, Chairman Pete Louden (Mr. Drenkhahn explained Mr. Louden would arrive a little late to the hearing), BC Advisor Police Chief Mark Chase and Architect Gary Goudreau, who has designed multiple Police Stations.

Dick Adams, Carolyn Schoenbauer, Diane Drenkhahn, Roger Kelley, Gene Manville, Brendan Laffey, Barbara Lauterbach, Ron Ulm, Seth Stearns, Janet Stearns, Lee Mattson, Jenn Hanson, Town Clerk Sheila Mohan, Emergency Management Director David Hughes, Meredith News Reporter Sarah Schmidt and Selectmen's Secretary Robin Woodaman were also present.

ARCHITECT GARY GOUDREAU: Mr. Goudreau explained he was hired one month ago and reported the BC had looked at potential sites, which has been narrowed to three potential sites. He explained the proposed Police Station will be 4,000 square feet in size. Mr. Goudreau presented the following:

Adding to the existing Municipal Building:

- If the addition is two stories, stairs and an elevator will be required; this will increase the cost of the project by \$85,000 to \$90,000.
- This location would allow the Police Department to stay close to the municipal center of the town.
- Connecting to existing utilities would save on costs.
- The site is fairly land locked and there would be parking issues.
- There is limited opportunity for future expansion.

Building on part of a seven acre Town-owned parcel (in back of the Congregational Church):

- A 280 to 300 foot access road will be required.
- This location would be further away from utility connections, so there would be a greater cost.
- This location would be further away from the municipal center of the town.
- This location offers the most options for future expansion.
- There would be more flexibility regarding the location of the building.

Brooks property/Morrill Park:

- This location would be close to the municipal center of the town.
- This location would be easy to recognize.
- It is close to the utilities.
- There is some flexibility for future expansion.
- There would be a separate parking lot for staff.
- There is a possibility of swapping some of the park property with the Brooks property.

Building requirements: Mr. Goudreau explained the Town currently has administrative space for the Police Chief and officers. He explained the Police Department cannot function as a Police Department in the current situation; the Center Harbor Police Department relies on the use of the Meredith Police Station. Mr. Goudreau explained there are State and Federal requirements for police departments.

Mr. Goudreau reported the BC's preference is for utilizing the Brooks and Morrill Parks properties.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Roger Kelley: Mr. Kelley questioned the possibility of using some of the Morrill Park property due to deed restrictions. Mr. Goudreau explained Town Attorney Doug Hill has learned from the Attorney General's Office that there was a vote during a 1950's Town Meeting for the park to be transferred to the Town; Attorney Hill is working on this issue. Mr. Kelley reported he would hate to see the park go for the Police Department. He questioned the 4,000 square foot size of the proposed building. Mr. Goudreau explained it would be a little more than ½ the size of the Municipal Building. Mr. Kelley reported he feels the project will be a "tough sell".

Carolyn Schoenbauer: Ms. Schoenbauer reported the history of Morrill Park; she explained one of the members of the Morrill Parks Association, Jack McAlister, resides in California. She reported the Association began the process to convey the property to the Town in 1952.

Ron Ulm: Mr. Ulm asked if the BC had considered the former Sheafe Harbor House property now owned by Bob Heath. Mr. Loudon explained the BC looked at Town-owned property as a way to keep costs down; he explained the BC could discuss this idea with Mr. Heath.

David Hughes: Mr. Hughes asked if the BC had considered swapping land with the Congregational Church for a better building location; Mr. Loudon explained they had discussed this as a group, but never approached the Church. He reported he supports the construction of a Police Department, but doesn't support moving the park. He explained people do not understand the history of the park and reported he feels the park has not been maintained over the years. Mr. Hughes volunteered to be on a committee to restore the park to the way it was.

Seth Stearns: Mr. Stearns reported he feels this project may cost \$500,000; Mr. Goudreau reported it will cost approximately \$800,000. Mr. Stearns reported he feels the BC is trying to fit a building on property the Town owns and asked why the Town doesn't buy property; he suggested the parcel next to the Congregational Church that is for sale. Mr. Stearns reported he feels if the conclusion of today's meeting was to decide on a site, it is the wrong decision; he feels the Town should buy land. He reported he likes the idea of locating the Police Department on the former Sheafe Harbor House property.

Diane Drenkhahn: Ms. Drenkhahn reported she and her family moved here fifteen years ago and appreciates the way the Town was. She suggested landscaping areas in a way that respects what was there. She reported Library Trustee Helen Heiner had ideas on ways to make the Library grounds more user-friendly; there was discussion regarding landscaping the grounds from the Library into the park area. Ms. Drenkhahn suggested the landscaping be from the Post Office to the Brooks house property.

John Schlemmer: Fire Chief Schlemmer reports he supports the construction of a Police Department and stated it is long overdue. He recommended the building be highly visible. Chief Schlemmer suggested the BC consider the second lot on Chase Circle, keep Morrill Park as it is and turn the seven acre parcel into green space.

Barbara Lauterbach: Ms. Lauterbach reported she feels the proximity of the Police Department to the Town Offices is extremely important.

Lee Mattson: Mr. Mattson asked if the new building was a single story built in the park area, could a second floor be added in the distant future for expansion. Mr. Goudreau explained the foundation could be constructed, at an added cost, to support two stories. Mr. Mattson reported he feels the Police would need additional time to respond to calls if the building was located on a long driveway behind the Church. He asked if it is better to have the Police Department visible.

Dick Adams: Mr. Adams commented on the price of land and reported there is a piece of property on Bean Road for sale; the asking price is \$250,000 for a little piece of land. Mr. Chance explained the project would cost over one million dollars if the Town had to purchase property. He explained building on Town-owned land would save that cost.

BUILDING LOCATION: After discussion, the majority consensus of those present was to pursue constructing the Police Department on the Chase Circle side of the Brooks property and landscape Morrill Park into the Library property. Ms. Schoenbauer reported she feels there was a positive discussion and the BC has been given direction for the next step. She reported the Town needs a police station for the Police Department to function.

OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED:

Floor plan of Police Station: Mr. Goudreau explained the floor plan would be the next step in the process; the first step was to determine the location. Chief Chase reported the Station will be very basic and meet federal standards. Mr. Loudon explained the BC spent a considerable amount of time visiting other police departments and researching what works and what doesn't work.

Capital Reserve Fund: Ms. Drenkhahn reported the Town has appropriated funds for a few years towards this construction. She reported she feels, because of the Capital Reserve Fund being approved at Town Meetings, the Town has the "mind set" for the Police Department.

Other large projects: Mr. Hughes asked the Selectmen how many big ticket items are planned for 2010. He asked about the sand/salt storage shed and the backhoe. Mr. Hanson reported the Selectmen plan to construct the sand/salt storage shed and purchase the backhoe this year. Mr. Hughes asked when the Selectmen plan to purchase a new fire truck; Mr. Hanson replied tentatively in 2011.

PETE LOUDON: Mr. Loudon reported the BC appreciates the input received today and encouraged people to attend their meetings on the first and third Thursday of every month.

Mr. Loudon reported how the BC came to be formed; in 2006 a Space Needs Committee (SNC) was formed to assess the needs of the Town. He explained the SNC determined there was a need for a Police Department. Mr. Loudon explained the Selectmen formed the BC in July of 2008 with the following two charges:

- Phase I:** Determine an appropriate location for a new Center Harbor Police Department space. This could be an addition to the existing Municipal Building or a completely separate building on a different piece of property.
- Phase II:** Develop a final design for the new Police Department Offices that can be taken to bid and brought to Town Meeting.

CLOSE OF PUBLIC HEARING: At 10:14 a.m. Ms. Mattson closed the Public Hearing.